



Why All the Fuss?

When you think about it, alcohol and other drugs can rob you of everything you have worked hard for: your health, family, and friends. Illegal drug use can result in being arrested and having to pay fines. Sometimes alcohol and other drug use can cost you your job.

Why Risk It?

Not everyone who uses alcohol or drugs becomes addicted. However, no one can predict who will or won't become addicted. What if it's you?

You may think that an alcoholic or drug addict is a person on the street who drinks out of a brown paper bag or who uses "hard" drugs. Not true. Alcohol and other drugs can affect any one of us--in all walks of life, at any age, and in all types of jobs.

How Can You Spot Abuse or Addiction?

Sometimes it's not easy. There are different patterns of abuse and addiction. Some people are "binge" users: they get into trouble by drinking alcohol or using other drugs off and on--only on the weekends or maybe only once a week--as an escape. Others are "maintenance" users: they use alcohol or other drugs regularly, often every day, to feel "normal." Although people use and abuse drugs in different ways, one thing is certain: if you become addicted, the disease will progress... and troubles will increase.

Think About It ... The cost of alcohol and other drug abuse can be high. For example, cocaine is very expensive; you may know people who have sold their personal belongings to buy it. But the cost of the drug is only the beginning ... soon to follow are:

- ♦ Lots of doctor bills--you get sick more often
- ♦ Legal bills and fines due to DWIs, accidents, marital problems
- ♦ Higher insurance bills
- ♦ Lost pay--you could lose your job
- ♦ Debts--you borrow money to support your habit
- ♦ You may even begin stealing to buy your drug of choice

What About Your Friends and Family?

Drug use can tear relationships apart. Friends and family start to question you about your drug use--they begin to distrust you. The people you love

start to avoid you. You begin to feel alone, especially because you need to hide your habit. Fear sets in. You start having more and more fights with people at home and on the job. You think about getting and using the drug all the time--it becomes more important than your family or friends.

What About Your Health?

Using alcohol and drugs can hurt your health. Addiction to any drug, including nicotine, can make you lose control over when and where you use drugs and how often you use them.

Nicotine

Smoking cigarettes or chewing tobacco gives you lung disease, heart disease, and many types of cancer (throat, mouth, and lung). Most adults



who smoke wish they didn't. If you start smoking when you're young, you may think you can quit when you get older. But as the addiction progresses,

it becomes harder to stop--much harder than people think. More people die from smoking than any other addiction.

People who quit smoking have withdrawal for a while: headaches, nicotine cravings, anxiety, upset stomach, and/or mood swings. You may think you can't bear these feelings, so you start up again. If you don't think cigarettes are addicting, talk to ex-smokers and ask them how they quit and what was the hardest part. Then get some help so you can stop smoking too.

Amphetamines (Speed) & Cocaine

As the addiction to these drugs gets worse, you become obsessed with getting the drug. You can't stay focused on tasks. You lose your appetite. Your behavior becomes extreme; you are always either really excited or really depressed. It's not that hard to overdose on speed or cocaine because once you start using, you want more and more of the drug to keep the high going. When the drug starts to wear off, you feel depressed and tired, so you keep using the drug. Before you know it, you're hooked.

Marijuana

Regular use of marijuana causes a loss of interest and motivation. You become lazy and don't care about making life better. You begin to feel depressed. It can also damage your lungs. It affects the brain and may cause you to become fearful as well as forgetful. Focusing on tasks is difficult. You become more interested in getting high than in spending time with friends. You lose the energy and drive to be involved in fun activities that don't include using pot.

PCP, LSD, and Designer Drugs

These drugs can cause hallucinations--you see and hear things that are not there. When this happens, you could do foolish or dangerous things. These drugs make you think you are stronger and more powerful than you really are. Accidents are more likely to happen due to poor judgment, and concentrating becomes really hard. Sometimes people on these drugs become anxious and violent, and this can lead to fights and other negative behaviors.

Heroin and Other Opiates

An opiate is a drug that makes you sleepy and lessens pain at the same time. Legal uses include: a doctor might give an opiate to ease pain, stop diarrhea, or calm a cough. Heroin is an opiate; it's effects on the body are similar to the other opiates given by doctors. However, it often contains a lot of impurities that add to its harmful effects.

Opiates are taken as pills or can be injected. Whether a person starts using opiates given by a doctor or uses them to change his or her mood (get high), long-term use can result in these problems: abuse or addiction; tolerance (you need more & more to get the same effect); and dependence (pain occurs if the drug use is stopped). Being hooked on any type of opiate can disrupt your life, family, and job.

Alcohol

Alcohol travels to every cell in the body, every tissue, and every organ. Over time, too much can damage your heart, raise your blood pressure, and cause cancer, liver disease, and brain damage, ulcers, weakened muscles, and it can and does lead to death.

Alcohol problems usually develop over time. Some people get sick fast; others drink for years without



knowing their body is being damaged. Many suffer withdrawal symptoms when they try to stop: headaches, anxiety, or the shakes. This can make it hard for you to concentrate, and you may become short-tempered.

As the addiction gets worse, so does withdrawal--you become more and more anxious and have stronger cravings. In the late stages of the disease, some in withdrawal see and hear things that aren't really there. Continuing to use alcohol once an

addiction has developed can result in liver and brain damage that may not be reversible. Also, a pregnant woman who drinks alcohol may have a baby born with fetal alcohol effects (FAE) or fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), which are characterized by mental and physical problems.

Prescription Drugs

Sometimes even drugs prescribed by a doctor for anxiety or pain can lead to abuse or addiction. Many people become hooked on these drugs without realizing it. Using prescription drugs that change your mood can affect your work and could contribute to accidents or costly mistakes. Talk to your doctor to be sure you understand the effects of any drug you might take. Ask your doctor to explain the risks, or ask any pharmacist. It's better to be careful than to risk becoming addicted.



Drugs and AIDS

A person who injects drugs and shares needles is at greater risk for being exposed to the HIV virus that causes AIDS. People who use alcohol and other drugs choose unsafe sexual behaviors while high or to help pay for their drugs. This behavior puts you at great risk for getting AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

A Drug-Free Program may give you a chance to get help if you have a problem with alcohol or other drugs or if you just want to help someone who is in trouble. So it pays to pay attention to the concern about drugs!

Where to Find Help

If you or someone you know has a problem with alcohol or other drugs, call any of these hotlines for help.

NH Helpline	1-800-852-3388
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment	1-800-662-HELP
Spanish	1-800-66-AYUDA
Toughlove	1-800-333-1069
Families Anonymous	1-800-736-9805

Source: The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
<www.health.org>

A Drug-Free Workplace Contributes To:

- ✓ Happier, safer employees
- ✓ Decreased insurance costs
- ✓ Better performance
- ✓ Better profits and thus better raises
- ✓ Fewer accidents
- ✓ Increased productivity
- ✓ And fewer worries overall